

the Wellspring

Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water
John 7:38

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Issue 1



Spring 2021



GATHER all people into a living relationship with Jesus Christ
GROW as disciples through worship, prayer and study of God's Word
GO into the world to share the gospel in word and deed

Bethesda Lutheran Church
GATHER...GROW...GO



In God's Love

~ Pastor Bryan Simmons

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling."

~ Psalm 46:1-3

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Have you ever read a psalm and wondered to yourself if it is just nice pomp to think about but, here in the real world, there are real problems and we simply don't have time for this kind of fluff? I hope it's not just been me. When I read in the Psalms things like the verses above, where it sings of God who will help us no matter what—even when the mountains are crumbling into the heart of the sea—it gives me the impression that my life should turn out just fine because I'm a believer. After all, we believe in an all-powerful God who is on our side because of Jesus. But we look around and see bad stuff happening all the time, even to believers. This "problem of evil" is something the most fervent believer and the most ardent atheist struggle with. The psalmist does sing that God is our refuge, but apparently not by stopping mountains from crumbling into the sea!

The dilemma we face is as old as time. It would be foolish of me to try and expound on it in a single magazine article. But I do think we can narrow in on it a bit for today. Our psalm makes two claims in its opening verses.

1) God is our refuge and strength, and 2) This remains true when Earth itself is in chaos. What if the promise isn't for preservation of this life, but something greater, beyond what we can understand in this life? If the very fabric of creation was undone, what is left? Just the eternal God and the promise, the promise that we are eternal with God who is love, grafted into God's eternal vine. This plane of existence is beyond anything we can possibly imagine. Let's imagine for a moment that you were somehow able to live life free of concern, free of pain, free. I picture sitting on a lounge chair on the beach watching the waves roll in as the tropical sun warms my very soul. But, it's lonely. Now imagine being connected to your loved ones and even everyone else, feeling the same way. Amazing.

This world is not free of pain. In God's love, we have freedom to act. But our freedom hurts others and ourselves when we abuse it. In God's wisdom, God sent Jesus the Christ to redeem us from ourselves and the pain others cause us—the very chaos us created beings inflict upon creation. Jesus does this by suffering and dying, not being spared in Creation itself, so that something greater could happen. Though this world rages on, though the waters roar and the mountains tremble, in the end we are left with God, our refuge and strength, who brings meaning to our suffering, who brings hope, a very present help in trouble. The joy of eternal love can be felt in glimpses here, made ever more joyous by our suffering. Creation itself can crumble away, but we will not be defeated, for we live in the fullness of the promise. May you feel the power of this promise in your life. May it move you so as to lift up those who suffer, revealing to them the joy to come. May God indeed be your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Bryan Simmons





Finding God Everywhere ~ **Tony Woodcock** Council President

Philippians 3:14: *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.*

It is those words from Paul that compel our determination, resolve, and resilience as Christians to do God's mission. Those words also seem appropriate for the time in which we live, as we will need determination, resolve, and resilience in continuing our battle against the COVID pandemic.

While it seems like we've been living with this pandemic for about five years now (hard to believe it's only been a year), we know there is still much time ahead of us before we escape the COVID shadow and return to "normal." It appears that creating the vaccine was the easy part. It's the logistics of distribution that seems to be the challenge. That said, we surely thank the Lord for all that he has given our country, including the scientists that devote their lives to studying viruses and how to defeat them.

With multiple vaccines being distributed, we can (maybe) see an end to the restrictions this pandemic has brought. There's "land on the horizon," but just as we cannot swim for shore at the first sight of land, we cannot get impatient and relax in our battle against the virus. Let us trust the doctors, scientists, and health officials to guide our decisions on gathering and let us trust God to guide our lives and give us the patience to carry on to when we can fully gather again without worry.

As I write this article, the snow is coming down and our world is cold and colorless. But I know that the calendar is turning. As the days grow longer and the sun slowly climbs higher in the sky each day, warmer temperatures will come, snow will melt, and the green of Spring will be upon us. What a glorious time that is, when we escape from Winter and life begins anew.

Every Spring, as the snow slowly melts away, my family likes to go to Ledges State Park, south of Boone. My favorite thing about Spring at Ledges is the ice falls. As snow melts in the hills above, it trickles down until it finds the still-frozen north-facing rock ledges where it freezes again and creates the beautiful grand ice formations stuck to the rock face. This image with my kids is the background on my work computer, so I'm constantly reminded of the beauty of God's springtime performance art.

I love looking for God in nature (and I find him everywhere!) and as I pondered how these ice formations come to be, I came to realize that they provide an analogy for our lives as Christians. We individual humans are the drops of water, trickling our way through life, but when we gather in the name of the God who made us and the Savior

who sacrificed for us, we become a beautiful formation that we call Christ's Church. However, unlike the ice fall that is limited to being a beautiful natural phenomenon, our gathering of "drops" has the ability to accomplish great things in the name of Christ, serving the children of God in our community, country, and world.

It is fitting that our escape from Winter and trek to Spring coincides with our Lenten journey, starting with Ash Wednesday and culminating in the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our pastors and staff have put together an excellent schedule of worship and activities from Ash Wednesday through Holy Week and Easter Sunday. There's online worship, and drive-in worship, and even limited in-person worship (YEAH!). We have much to be hopeful for at Bethesda:

- We have a facility that is better than ever—many thanks to the Facilities Team that lets nothing stand in their way.
- We have pastors and a staff that are constantly adapting to improve our worship and finding ways to connect and even gather safely (drive-in events have been a highlight). Think about it: What started as a fireside chat streamed from a smartphone has transformed into a rich and fulfilling worship experience.
- We have a music director with a creative imagination that can't be stopped by restrictions and limitations.
- We have many volunteers that selflessly give their time to make Bethesda Lutheran gather, grow, and go.

I am excited for what lies ahead for Bethesda Lutheran Church in our Springtime Lenten journey and I look forward to joining you and seeing you along the way.

Go with God's speed,
Tony Woodcock Council President



Bethesda is a proud RIC Member!

We invite you to join our community and share in God's abundant grace knowing that you cannot be separated from the love of God by your age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, physical or mental abilities or faith background.

By congregational vote, we have taken the first step of Reconciling in Christ. Our long-standing welcome statement has been meaningfully changed from, "All Are Welcome", to the intentional and descriptive statement above. Share it everywhere with us! Let everyone know that here—with the Bethesda community—every single person has access to an equal relationship with Christ Jesus.

Please visit: www.reconcilingworks.org/RIC to find out more about our intention of inclusivity.



Bethesda Music Ministry Piano Addition

~ Mark Kretsinger-Harries Worship & Music Director

As you may have seen on our Facebook page a few weeks ago, Bethesda's music ministry has made an exciting addition to the Sanctuary—a very nice (used) Yamaha C5 grand piano, purchased from the Octagon Center for the Arts.



The Octagon leaders have big plans to convert their large 3rd-floor main gallery space into a cooperative workspace for local artist and creatives, and the piano that resided there needed a new home. So in addition to improving the music and worship life of our congregation, this purchase supports the arts in our community which is always a

noble and worthwhile cause for God's people. This new piano also opens doors for concerts and recitals outside of worship, involving musicians and ensembles of a wide range of styles and backgrounds.

Though the new piano is already a cut above in size and build, local piano technician Tom Russell removed the "action" (keys & hammers) to his workshop for three days for specialized work that makes it play and sound like

new. He also spent several hours "voicing" the piano in the Sanctuary, making countless adjustments so that it sounds its very best in our particular acoustical space.

Finally, the baby grand piano performed admirably for many years in the sanctuary has a new home as well... in the Music Room! This instrument will transform the experience of Choir and Choristers rehearsals as it fills the room with warm, beautiful sounds.

Many thanks to everyone who supported this purchase through capital campaign contributions and otherwise!





Bethesda Youth and Families

THE LORD'S PRAYER



2021 So Far and Going Far

We have been having a ton of fun in SPLASH Sunday School this winter! We are super excited to have welcomed back **Glenn Crosswait** and **Lori Woodcock** to lead our sessions as we learn about **THE LORD'S PRAYER**! We will continue this curriculum until Ash Wednesday, after which we will switch to learning about the meaning behind Lent.

CONFIRMATION has continued to be fun while we've been meeting mostly virtually. We are almost done with our Old Testament Unit, and look forward to learning about the History of Lutheranism and the Catechism. In December, we were able to serve our neighbors at **Food at First**—in our first community outreach event of the year! Confirmands will make their Affirmation of Baptism during worship on May 2.

The confusing start of the pandemic in 2020 put a quash on Holy Communion, and our First Communion education program. Here in 2021 we are back in action, and three classes will be held (primarily for second and third graders) March 10, 17 and 24. First Communion will be celebrated during Maundy Thursday worship on April 1. Classes are for children AND parents. Call the church office today if you have a child ready to participate.

Our FAMILY FUN DAYS events have slowed down a bit, this cold winter, but have nevertheless been great fun. Bethesda's first ever(!!) **Car Relay Scavenger Hunt** had many teams compete to find fun landmarks and hidden treasures all over Ames and surrounding areas. This was a great outreach event that resulted in 17 teams participating, with our very own Weber family taking home the trophy! And our annual **Seven Oaks Wintry Fun** trip was another great success, with perfect chilly weather, and tons of snow! Thanks to all who participated.

We are going to host our annual Community Easter Egg Hunt this year! All are welcome to this outdoor, safely-distanced event, March 27 from 9:30–11:00 am. Everyone will receive a goody bag, and we'll offer three different hunting scenarios for different age groups. We'll also have a photo booth backdrop for you to save the memory!

Worship, Music & Arts

~ **Jeanne Stewart** Board Chair

Worship, Music and Arts Ministry Teams have been paused during the Covid-19 Pandemic; when life gets back to "normal" all of our teams will start up again albeit it might not be exactly the same as we before. We have had a small, very dedicated group of people who have been making the weekly on-line worship services and outdoor services possible.

A very big thank you goes to Pastors Bryan and Ryan, Miriam, Mark, Mary, Lynn, Lisa, Rod Fisher, Allan Schmidt, Randy & Kathy Slocum, Jim Stewart, Lise, Hannah, Halley Rollins, Jason Atwood, Dave & Sharon Anderson, Maynard Hogberg, Trace Houge Brakke, the Choristers and Adult Choir, and Louie Banitt and the Carillon Bell Choir. Pastors Bryan and Ryan, who am I forgetting?!



The Sanctuary is ready for limited seating—for the first time since March of 2020.



People! In the Church! Worshipping! On a Sunday!

It was exciting this morning to start the long road back to "normal" as there were 16 adults (including the Pastors and sound and video crew) and five children worshipping together in the Sanctuary while the rest of us continued to worship online. After everyone gets both vaccination shots and the pandemic is under control, we will all be glad to get back to worshipping together as a Bethesda Family.

Stay safe and hope you get your vaccinations soon!



The Pastors are ready to process in for worship, Tony Woodcock is our greeter for the first service, and Jim Stewart is running sound.



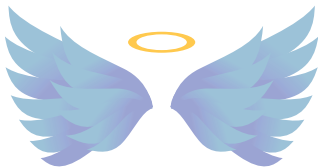
Sunday worship attendees listen to Pastor Ryan give his sermon. All services are still livestreamed concurrently.



BETHESDA WOMEN

Bethesda Women are learning about angels in the four-month Bible Study written by **Christa Von Zychlin**.

Does that name sound familiar? She and her husband



Wayne were pastors at Bethesda 20+ years ago, 1996-2001. How cool is it that our current lessons are inspired by one of our former pastors?

“With this first lesson, we have begun the spiritual exercise of looking for angels above us (Psalm 8), beyond us (Job) and among us (Luke 2). Next month (February), we will come up against angels who confront us.” (source: *Gather Magazine*, Jan/Feb issue, p.29) Sounds intriguing!

You are all welcome to join our discussions via Zoom Prayer Circle. We can screen-share the study... if you don't have a copy of *Gather Magazine*. However, if you'd like a copy, we have several that come to the church... please ask Karla, or Lynn in the office. The “*Gather*” magazine is a unique opportunity for women of the church. It has grown into a colorful, contemporary collection of articles that includes this monthly Bible study we promote among our Bethesda membership. Clearly, the ordination of women has enriched articles and studies, but women from other denominations—and men—also contribute their stories. One glance at “WELCA” on a computer will open whole new experiences. New subscriptions to *Gather* are currently available at a reduced price. (\$9.95/year)

If you'd like to be on the email list to receive the Zoom link, please contact Karla.

Our upcoming Zoom Prayer Circle gatherings are as follows:

- Thursday, February 25th
9:30am visit . . . 10:00am Bible Study
- Thursday, March 25th
9:30am visit . . . 10:00am Bible Study
- Thursday, April 22nd
9:30am visit . . . 10:00am Bible Study



QUILTS

Updates from WELCA (Women of the ELCA) activities: Several boxes of quilts were finished for Lutheran World Relief last fall, but remained in a Bethesda closet after our synod pick-up was cancelled last fall. Happily, Jeanne Rieck reports that a dozen of these quilts were welcomed by Catholic Charities, and more will be offered to another local service called Martha's House. Two packed boxes, and possibly more, will be ready for a hoped-for spring LWR pick-up. Please call Jeanne Rieck if you are ready to cut and sew fabric (can be done at home!), fit pieces into quilts, sew, and finish into these durable 60" x 80" quilts for LWR. Small groups wearing masks and distancing can probably accomplish wonders and have a great time!

WOMEN'S BOARD ELECTIONS

Thank you to everyone who voted in the election! Our officers for the one-year term beginning Feb. 1. . . President—Karla Mortensen; VP—Lindsay Peters; Secretary—Gretchen Mosher; **Treasurer—OPEN**; Members-at-Large—Carolyn Ahlstrom; Jo Hutchins

We still need to appoint a Treasurer. Have you been looking for a way to connect with the women and love numbers? If so, please reach out to any board member for more information!

We are currently having Zoom Board Meetings every other month. If an urgent topic comes up, we will schedule additional meetings.

- Tuesday, March 23rd, 6:30pm
- Tuesday, May 25th, 6:30pm
- Tuesday, July 27th, 6:30pm

SCANDINAVIAN COFFEE

We will decide at the July Meeting what we will be planning for this year's Scandinavian Coffee. We are hoping and praying it will be possible to have an in-person event, although we may need to modify some aspects. Stay tuned!



Thank Your Food Pantry Volunteers

~ **Rod Fischer** Food Pantry Co-Chair

The Bethesda Community Food Pantry has continued to offer curbside service through the winter. The number of households that use the Food Pantry continue to be lower than they were prior to March, 2020. We'd like to extend a big thank you to a dedicated group of volunteers that have helped keep the food pantry open during the pandemic. There's a core group of 25 volunteers whose guidance results in the smooth operation of the food pantry during open hours.

Joyce O'Donnell is our volunteer coordinator and Donna Grooms handles the ordering and day-to-day operation of the food pantry. Fred Vogtlin works almost every day stocking and organizing the food pantry shelves in preparation for curbside service. Denise Wheeler writes the thank you notes to the many individuals and organizations that donate money or food to the pantry to help those in need. Ron Morgan supplies homemade bread to the pantry on a weekly basis. For the second consecutive year

Kate Nettleton has translated our updated food pantry brochure into Spanish. Lisa Ailshie designs and prints our brochures.

The ISU Meat Lab has made generous donations of meat and cheese to the pantry, the ISU Women's Club G.I.V.E group has been volunteering at the food pantry since August and United Way helped fund the 2020 Holiday Gift Cards.

The annual holiday distribution consisted of distributing 350 Fareway gift cards at \$50 each during the months of November and December. These cards could not be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco or lottery tickets. In addition, the Bethesda Crafters created 100 stockings that were given to families with children during the holiday season.

The plan is to continue to serve our guests via curbside until the church is fully open.



CROPWalk 2020 Results

~ **Rod Fischer** CROPWalk Ministry Team Chair

Despite the fact no one could participate in a "live" Church World Service CROPWalk last October, the pandemic made only a minor dent in the total amount of money raised to fight hunger.

In 2020, the Ames CROPWalk raised \$31,435 which was a 2.4% drop from the amount received in 2019. In 2020, we were assisted by donations from Key Cooperative and Land 'O Lakes Cooperative. Bethesda members donated \$2,350, a 14% drop from the previous year.

The local Ames CROP Committee is optimistic we'll be able to hold our Fall walk in 2021. Thanks to all of you who donated to combat hunger last year and hopefully we'll be able to meet in person for our October 10th walk!





Bethesda **Member** in the News

~ Reprinted from **KCCI.com**

A 6-year-old from Ames is on a mission to make the holidays brighter for children at Blank Children's Hospital.

Maggie Mahoney has collected more than 1,200 tins of Play-Doh for patients at the children's hospital.

"I just wanted to help them," Maggie Mahoney said.



According to her mother, Maggie's inspiration came from spending time at the hospital with her older sister, Riley.

"(Riley) was diagnosed a little over a year ago with leukemia," said Emily Mahoney, Maggie and Riley's mother. "It was a huge shock."

Emily Mahoney said Play-Doh is a popular way for patients to stay busy during scary treatments.

She said Riley is all too familiar with spending hours, days or weeks in a hospital room and that Riley approves of the Play-Doh drive.

"She has gone through so much and is so tough," Mahoney said. "We are incredibly proud."

Maggie is her biggest supporter. She is right there with her all the time.

Riley Mahoney is doing well and will hopefully be by her sister's side to deliver the big donation.

"This journey has been very hard for our family, but we have also gained so much out of it," Emily Mahoney said. "So, I couldn't have asked for a better lesson for my girls to give back."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bethesda members Maggie and Riley are the daughters of Emily & Kevin Mahoney, and granddaughters of Kathy and Phil Harris.

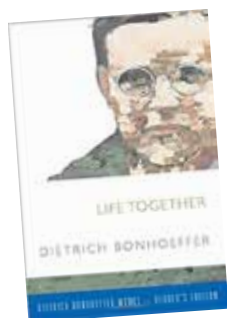


Recommended Reading from the Church Library

Library reading suggestions for this month include the Jan/Feb *Gather* magazine's Bible Study, "Journey with Angels," written by our own former Pastor Christa von Zychlin. This four-month study is appropriate to do with a variety of people having differing beliefs, ethnicity, political preferences, etc. So invite a neighbor or friend from another congregation and read this information before joining the Bethesda Women's discussion on the fourth Thursday of each month, for a great learning experience.



Then turn your attention to Barclay's commentary on the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:5— "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth"—that our AMOS leaders training participants recently read and discussed.



Our own pastors are inviting us to reread Bonhoeffer's classic, *Life Together*. All of these readings can be checked out from your own church library.

~ Jan Gray



Are you having trouble receiving Bethesda's emails? We've posted an article on our website that addresses this issue. You can enable your email on your computer to safely allow (or "whitelist") the BethesdaAmes.org domain to reach you. From our homepage www.bethesdaames.org click on the "Resources" tab, and then click on the image printed above (Email Whitelist Guide). Then click the button with your type of Email. Still have questions? Contact Linda Fevold at lfevold@bethesdaames.org.



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Sundays @ 9:30 am

Lenten Wednesdays @ 6:30 pm

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For more information on our inclusivity visit:
<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/RIC/>

NOTE: please contact Lisa Ailshie at 232-6256 or contact@BethesdaAmes.org with requests/comments regarding this magazine, or to submit an article for the Summer issue (deadline May 6, 2021)

All submissions to Bethesda Lutheran Church's *The Wellspring* magazine are subject to editing for clarity, space, and content. Artwork credit for an element in this month's *Wellspring* cover photo: <https://tinyurl.com/yxhrbmh6> | Pixabay



March 2021, LSI Bulletin/Newsletter Article and Story

March is National Professional Social Work Month

March is National Professional Social Work Month, a time to recognize social workers and thank them for all they do. At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we are grateful for the many social workers who have dedicated their lives to serving our communities across the state!

Maybe you have never had a social worker involved in your life. Yet, whether you realize it or not, you have had the benefit of their behind-the-scenes work in your community. Social workers help people help themselves by overcoming life's most difficult circumstances or managing challenges of everyday living: poverty, abuse, mental illness, depression, addiction, disability, and many other situations.

Iowa wouldn't be the same without the patience, guidance, and empowerment that social workers provide. Happy National Professional Social Work Month!

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

A Path to Hope and Healing

Mike remembers feeling angry and depressed, and his family was at risk of falling apart. When he decided to start Therapy Services with LSI, he questioned the decision. Therapy wasn't easy and when he missed an appointment, he didn't want to go back.

But through working with his LSI therapist, Sherry, for the past several months, he has found ways to grow and heal. During each session, Sherry is there to listen without judgement, and she provides a listening ear for anything Mike wants to talk about. At the end, Mike is always given a type of homework or a lesson to think about until they meet again.

While they originally began meeting in person, Sherry has continued to be available through virtual therapy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual sessions ensure Sherry and Mike can continue meeting regularly, on a flexible schedule and from the safety of their own homes.

"Thank God for working through LSI in-person and through telehealth, and especially for Sherry, who helps people like myself who have been lost for years. If I hadn't chosen LSI, I wouldn't have met my therapist who has truly helped me keep my family and stay alive," Mike says. "I look back at the progress I have made and see some light peeking through to the end."

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Rejoicing in Christ this Spring!

Tuesdays, February 23–March 30

Pastors' Book Study *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer 10 am & 7 pm
Sign-up for either session via Zoom or limited in-person attendance*



Saturday, March 27 9:30-11 am
Easter Egg Hunt a safely-distanced community event*



Thursday, April 1 7:00 pm
Maundy Thursday Worship a Livestream event including First Communion



Friday, April 2 7:00 pm
Good Friday Worship a Livestream event



Saturday, April 3 5:30 pm
Easter Vigil Worship a Livestream event



Sunday, April 4 10:00 am
Easter Sunday Worship a Drive-In event with limited in-person attendance*



Wednesday, April 14 (rescheduled!) 10:00 am
Sips & Hymns Drive-In Watch on-screen, listen on car radio, SING!



* Sign-up at www.bethesdaames.org/upcoming-events